

# THE ASYLUM

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Volume VIII, No. 4

Winter, 1990



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## The Asylum

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## NBS news &amp; notes

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations in writing shall be directed to the secretary, who will in turn ask for written acceptance from each nominee. All nominations must be received by the secretary no later than 15 January 1991. Ballots will be mailed with the first issue of 1991. The elected officers and their duties are 1) the president, who will preside at all meetings, fill elected office vacancies by appointment, appoint committees, and cast the deciding vote in case of a tie; 2) the vice president, who will assume the president's duties in his absence and assist the president with his duties as required.; 3) the secretary/treasurer, who will keep minutes of all meetings; process all membership, election, and other correspondence as described in the by-laws or as may otherwise be necessary; receive all funds, pay all bills, and issue an annual financial report; 4) A Board of six members, who will, along with the three above described officers, comprise the executive board, which has the following duties: to appoint the non-elected offices of editor, convention chairman, and others which become necessary; by majority vote to make all decisions regarding membership, conventions, dues, general policy, and amendments to the by-laws.

It is desirable but not mandatory that our elected officers attend the annual American Numismatic Association's conventions, at which our annual meeting and only business meeting is held every year. Five members of the executive board are required for a quorum in order to transact business.

Send all nominations to

John F. Bergman, Secretary/treasurer  
Numismatic Bibliomania Society  
4223 Iroquois Ave.  
Long Beach, Calif. 90713  
U. S. A.

As was noted in the fall issue, a scheduled but informal meeting of our society was held during the ANA convention in Seattle, on 24 August. The following notes about John Pittman's talk have been extracted from Wayne Homren's minutes of that meeting.

Our guest speaker, John Pittman, entertained us with a discussion of how he built a numismatic library along with his famous coin collection.

John has been an avid reader all his life. At the University of Rochester he found a good library, and he delighted in searching the stacks for rare and unusual books. He still remembers the delight he had in finding that he was the first student to check out a particular book in one hundred fifty years.

In the 1930's he began actively buying numismatic books, his most important source being Barney Bluestone, a coin dealer in Syracuse, New York. Barney's coin shop was a Mecca for scholars and book collectors. John's vocation as a paper chemist made him well aware of the deterioration of acidic papers; Barney nicknamed John "the paper sniffer" from his habit of always smelling a book before he bought it; John knows that once deterioration has started it is difficult to arrest.

Another of John's important sources of books was George Bauer, who often sold him his duplicates. Other sources were Judge Sawiki of Cleveland, Dr Sartorius, and Dr. Pipito. His set of *The numismatist* was obtained from John F. Jones, a past president of the ANA. In addition to using his own books, which are housed in three separate locations, John has taken advantage of his domestic and foreign travels to visit great libraries and look at their books. He pointed out the value of numismatic literature for identifying rarities unknown to most collectors. Often coins or sets of coins found described in old catalogs or periodicals have never been heard from since. Some detective work often proves fruitful in locating such numismatic rarities.

John pointed out that as coin values increase people shift their interest to related items; tokens, medals, books. To this can be attributed the great increase in the prices of numismatic books in recent years. John predicted that condition will eventually become as important a factor in literature prices as it has become in coin prices. Ω

## Editorial

There is something disturbing about incomplete sets of books. A bibliomaniac is not content with having the last few editions of the red book; he wants at least one copy of each edition. A famous book collector (Richard Heber) once said that a man needs three copies of a book, one to preserve on his shelves, one to read, and one to lend to his friends. I haven't lent any books since I lost *The tropic of cancer* to a friend. When I gave it to her she brightly remarked, "Oh, this hasn't even been read!" In fact it had been read by me and by two other friends; I suppose she hasn't returned it because now it looks read.

But I digress. An incomplete set can be the impetus for searching for the missing volumes. I had a nerve-wracking experience with an Australian book seller (not, I hasten to add, our friend Mark Freeman). I had ordered a two volume work from him; I received only volume one. I wrote requesting either the missing volume or a refund. Months went by with no response. I believe it was six months later that I received the missing volume, along with an apology. It was a bad six months.

It is a bad practice to buy a partial set in the hope of completing it. Several years ago I was in Haslam's and saw the Oxford *History of technology*. I fell in love with that lovely five-volume set but couldn't afford it at the time. A couple of years later I had saved up enough money for it, but alas! it was sold. It was out of print! Only five years ago I found the first three volumes at a Friends of the Library book sale; I decided that half a loaf was better than none and bought them. Do not, however, write offering me volumes four and five. Two years later I was able to buy the missing volumes from the same Friends of the Library, to my mind an incredible stroke of luck. What usually happens is that after buying an incomplete set you are offered a complete one, and you might as well flush the broken set, since you won't be able to sell it for much. All this is by way of introducing another check list, this one of a numismatic series which is apparently complete, *A catalog of modern world coins*, edited by the late Richard Yeoman. See page 18. Ω

## Books about U.S. silver and gold coins prior to 1837 and pioneer and territorial gold

by Jeff Rock

*This is the second part of Jeff's bibliography.*

Breen, Walter (*continued*). *The minting process: how coins are made and mismade*. Beverly Hills, 1970. 163 pp., ill.

A modern rarity, this soft-cover book consists of twenty four lessons on coinage, with an emphasis on minting fundamentals, error coins, and blundered dies. At the end of the booklet is a final exam of fifty questions which was to be returned to and graded by the American Institute of Professional Numismatists. Those passing were awarded diplomas. Much of the abundant information in this book was previously unpublished. This booklet is extremely difficult to locate; I have never seen a copy in an auction, and my copy cost over \$50 a decade ago. If it does appear at auction it should sell for \$50 to \$75.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Walter Breen's complete encyclopedia of U.S. and colonial coins*. New York, 1988. 754 pp., ill.

A numismatic classic even though it's less than two years old. Billed as "The ultimate guide to U.S. coins", this mammoth volume lives fully up to its claims. Breen, one of the foremost numismatists our country has ever seen, spent ten years writing this book, and the results speak for themselves. Historical information, rarity, mintage figures, die characteristics, and variety information are presented on every coin from the earliest colonial issues of 1616 down to the present day. Over four thousand illustrations, many of them of coins from famous collections, show most of the coins listed. The book's drawbacks are few: some outdated material, especially in the colonial section; the publisher's insistence on placing the halftones beneath the descriptions (the opposite of almost all publications); numbering every issue, which does not allow for the insertion of subsequent discoveries. These few negatives are far outweighed by the amazing depth and diversity of the material offered. The book has justifiably been described as a complete numismatic library between two boards. If you had to limit yourself to one book a year, this should be the first. The original price of \$75 was quickly discounted, and new copies can still be had at under \$60.

Breen, Walter H. and Ronald J. Gillio. *California pioneer fractional gold: historic gold rush small change 1852-1856 and suppressed jewelers' issues 1859-1882*. Pacific Coast Auction Galleries, 1983. 160 pp., ill.

The standard reference in the field. Extensively researched by Breen, the coins are separated by issue and assigned to specific coiners and jewelers. Much of this abundant historical material was previously unpublished. The halftones are excellent in this superb reference work. In soft covers 2750 copies were issued; they are available for \$25 to \$30 and well worth the price. The deluxe issue, limited to 250, with two additional color plates and hard covers, has sold for \$125.

Browning, A. W. *Early quarter dollars of the United States 1796-1838*. New York: Wayte Raymond, 1925. 36 pp., 8 photographic plates.

The standard reference for the series, complete with extensive descriptions and photographs of every variety then known to exist. Only one hundred copies were printed of the first edition, and these have consistently sold for over \$1,000. Five were deluxe, bound in full morocco and autographed by the publisher. All the deluxe copies were sold to super-collector Col. E.H.R. Green, and with the dispersal of his estate they reached the market. The only sale price I know of for a deluxe copy is \$3200; if one were offered today it would probably go for more. John J. Ford, Jr. produced a reprint in 1950. This edition features a somewhat trimmed text and plates made from the original negatives. These plates are better than those in the original. Ford's edition is one of the rarities of modern numismatics, around twenty five copies were produced, five of them being bound in red calf. The regular issue has sold for as high as \$750, the deluxe has brought \$1000. The 1962 reprint by Zenith Trading Company., Newton Center, Mass., contains 44 pages and includes the quarter dollar section from the Haseltine type table. It usually sells for \$10. The eight photographic plates, which were offered separately, are much rarer than the text and have sold for \$100. The 1975 reprint issued in New York has 36 pages and halftone illustrations. It sells for about \$15. The New York publisher Durst issued a reprint in 1977 and reissued it in 1981. This hardcover book, which is of a somewhat higher quality than most of that firm's reprints, sells for around \$10. Bowers and Merena Galleries will soon be publishing a completely revised edition, annotated by Walter Breen, Doug Winters, and other collectors.

Brunk, Gregory G. *American and Canadian countermarked coins*. Rockford, 1987. 349 pp., ill.

Countermarked coins are an interesting, often overlooked, area that combines the worlds of the coin collecting and exnumia. Brunk's book is the standard reference, listing many thousand counterstamps, some of them not published previously. Available for around \$40.

Burnie, R.H. *Small California and territorial gold coins: quarter dollars, half dollars, dollars*. Pascagoula, 1955. 96 pp.

A controversial monograph, as many of the varieties described by Burnie are not listed elsewhere and are thought to be nothing more than fantasies of the author. This work does cover the fractional gold pieces issued for fairs and expositions from roughly 1900 to 1915, pieces not cataloged elsewhere. The book was issued in black, green, and dark blue covers (if anyone else out there cares, the green and blue are the scarcest variants, while the black is by far the most common) and is available for around \$30.

Buttrey, Theodore V., ed. *Coinage of the Americas*. New York: American Numismatic Society, 1973. 139 pp., ill.

An interesting and informative booklet, issued in conjunction with the major exhibition of western hemisphere coinage held by the ANS in 1973. The articles of interest to collectors of United States coins are one by Eric P. Newman on colonial issues and one by Walter Breen on U.S. coinage which includes private and territorial gold. The book is intended as an overview; no series is dealt with in detail. Still available from the ANS for under \$10, it is a bargain at that, since it contains articles written by two of our country's leading numismatists.

Carothers, Neil. *Fractional money: a history of the small coins and fractional paper currency of the United States*. New York, 1930. 372 pp., ill.

The book form of a doctoral dissertation presented to Princeton University in 1916, it deals with all the minor coinages, including silver, relating why some of the different metals were used. A very readable book, especially the section about the circulation of coins during the Civil War. The scarce originals have bought \$75-\$100. The 1967 reprint issued by A.M. Kelly sells for around \$30. The 1988 Bowers and Merena Galleries reprint is still available for around \$20.

Clain-Stefanelli, Elvira. *Numismatic bibliography*. Munich: Battenberg Verlag, c1985. 1848 pp.

By far the largest, most thorough bibliography of numismatic works ever written. This book, printed on some of the thinnest paper imaginable (a necessity, since with close to two thousand pages it would have been larger than the phone directories for New York City!), lists numismatic books, pamphlets and articles printed in commercial, organizational, and private publications. The book is divided into logical sections, and at the end of each section is a list of some of the best auction catalogs pertinent to that section. Use of this tool is facilitated by the inclusion of six indices: Authors, Collectors, Personal names, Geographical terms, Numismatic terms, and Public collections. A must for every numismatic researcher, I found myself consulting it frequently while compiling this bibliography. The price tag of around \$80 may frighten a few people off, but the amount of time and energy saved by this magnificent publication more than makes up for the cost. If you're serious about numismatics you should have this book.

Clain-Stefanelli, Elvira and Vladimir. *The beauty and lore of coins, currency and medals*. Croton-on-Hudson: Riverwood Publishers Ltd., 1974. 256 pp., ill.

A lavishly produced coffee table book featuring some of the most beautiful coins around. Loaded with information, this is yet another book that should be in every library. Well worth the \$15 to \$25 copies have cost.

Clifford, Henry H. "Pioneer gold coinage in the west 1848-1861: a study in frontier economics" in *The westerners brand book: book nine*. Los Angeles, 1961, pages 217-260, ill.

A very substantial monograph describing the various issues and illustrating the major types. In addition there is substantial background information, with photographs of the mint sites, original dies, and the like. Only 550 copies of *The brand book* were printed, and these are avidly sought after by both numismatists and western history buffs, so the book is difficult to find and usually costs around \$50. The Clifford monograph was privately reprinted and is quite scarce; the only auction record I can find for it is \$35.

Comparette, Thomas Louis. *Catalogue of coins, tokens and medals in the numismatic collection of the United States mint at Philadelphia, Pa*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1912. Later editions 1913, 1914. 584-694 pp., 15 plates.

This hefty volume catalogs all the numismatic items formerly at the Philadelphia mint but now in the Smithsonian Institute. Very little background information, some of which is inaccurate. One of the reasons for the book's relative scarcity is that the listing of U.S. pieces (including colonials, territorial and private gold, and patterns) is covered in a scant 100 pages. The second edition is by a small margin the most difficult to find, although all three should be available for from \$50 to \$80.

Cross, Ira B. *Financing an empire: history of banking in California*. Chicago, 1927. Four vols., xii, 1002, 531, 448 pp., ill.

A mammoth reference, this four volume set is full of information on the early banking practices of California, much of it both historically and numismatically important. Vol. I is the most desired by numismatists, since it contains extensive notes on pioneer gold. The work is almost always seen as a set, selling for around \$300. Expect to pay at least \$125 for Vol. I if you find it by itself.

Davis, David J., Russell J. Logan, Allen F. Lovejoy, John W. McCloskey, and William Subjack. *Early United States dimes 1796-1837*. Ypsilanti, 1984. 279 pp., ill.

The bible of the John Reich Collector's Society. In the past fifty years every type and denomination of early coinage has been thoroughly cataloged, usually with several reference books having been written on each. The only series missing from this numismatic bounty was that of early dimes. The five authors, with the help of unpublished manuscript notes of Walter Breen, have written a book that will surely be considered a numismatic classic, much like Dr Sheldon's book on early large cents. Each variety is described in detail and illustrated, with information on rarity and condition-census examples. The tremendous amount of research that went into producing a work like this is quite evident: even the smallest details are covered in a professional, informative manner. I would heartily recommend this book to all collectors interested in early silver coinages, but I have a feeling that it is already in the libraries of the majority of those collectors. Copies for those of you who still haven't obtained one are available for around \$40. A deluxe issue, limited to 100 copies and autographed by the authors has sold for \$50-\$60.

Dickeson, Montroville W. *The American numismatic manual of the currency of money of the aborigines, and colonial, state, and United States coins*. Philadelphia:[Lippincott & Co.], 1859. Later editions 1860, 1865. 265-271 pp., 19 or 20 metallic-ink lithographic plates.

The first collector's bible, attempting to give a complete overview of American numismatics between two boards. *The manual*, as it was referred to in its day, presented much information not found elsewhere and has proved to be a starting point of sorts for most subsequent research of the era. Unfortunately a large portion of the information presented is totally inaccurate (although in defense of the author it should be noted that many of the errors are directly traceable to inaccurate and incomplete early mint records and to rumors of the day). The book was printed in record numbers, and many copies have survived to this day, although not always in very good condition. The current price range of \$150 to \$225 does not accurately reflect the tremendous impact this pioneering work had on American numismatics. A scarce issue of the third edition, produced by

Lippincott & Co. after they had run out of plates, bears the words "Without Plates" on the spine and sells for around \$75.

Dinardo, Joseph E. *The private mint of Moffat & Co.*

This extremely scarce privately printed booklet of twelve pages, including three plates and photographs of John Moffat and George A.F. Kuner, has good photographs, although not of the quality of those in other works on pioneer and territorial gold coinages. I have not been able to find out the number of copies printed, but it must have been small. It took me seven years to find a copy; I paid \$35.

Doering, David and Susan. *California fractional gold*. Santa Monica, 1980. 144 pp., ill.

A book of limited usefulness. The authors do describe the varieties in detail and present some varieties not listed by Lee, but there are also a number of mistakes and omissions. Some of the pieces given separate numbers are counterfeits or error pieces. The valuations are extremely high for pieces the Doerings owned, while those lacking in his collection were given very modest prices. Copies of the first edition sell for around \$30. A second edition, by David Doering alone, contains 196 pages and was printed in 1982. This edition is slightly more useful, though it has been surpassed in every way by the Breen work described above. The price for the second edition has remained at around \$50.

Doty, Richard. *The Macmillan encyclopedic dictionary of numismatics*. New York: Macmillan, 1982. 355 pp., ill., some color.

The standard dictionary used by most numismatists. Quite a bit more up to date than the Frey work described below, with more illustrations than any other numismatic dictionary. It covers coins, tokens, medals, paper money, decorations, coin weights, and primitive money in an easy-to-read manner which makes some of the most obscure facets of numismatics comprehensible to even a beginning collector. Well worth the \$40 or so a copy will cost.

Du Bois, William E. *Pledges of history: a brief account of the collection of coins belonging to the mint of the United States, more particularly of the antique specimens*. Philadelphia, 1846. 138 pp., one plate of ancient coins.

The first book describing the mint collection of coins, which was officially started in 1808 although chief coiner Adam Eckfeldt had saved many pieces from the inception of coining. Very scarce. The original printing must have been quite small, as there were only a handful of collectors of U.S. coinage at the time. Copies have routinely sold for \$150 to \$200.

Duphorne, R. *The early quarter dollars of the United States, 1796, 1804-1807, 1815-1828, 1831-1838*. The Windsor Group, 1975. 73 pp., ill.

A thoroughly readable work and, although not a replacement for the Browning work described earlier, still of interest to collectors of early quarter dollars. Although the only auction record I have is \$10, the work seems somewhat difficult to find.

Eckfeldt, Jacob R[eesse] and William E[wing] Du Bois. *A manual of gold and silver coins of all nations struck within the past century showing their history and legal basis and their actual weights, fineness and value, chiefly from original and recent assays...* Philadelphia, 1842. 220 pp., 16 engraved plates.

A landmark in American numismatics, this work was the only practical guide available for almost twenty years and the first book to illustrate pioneer and territorial gold coins and to depict the 1804 silver dollar. The plates were engraved by the medal-ruling machine at the mint. The fine frontispiece of the mint building was a first in illustration: from a daguerreotype was made a bas-relief in soft metal, an electrotype of which was used to make an engraving. Copies of this historic and still useful work have sold for around \$150. A supplement issued in December 1849 contains a fine plate of California and Mormon gold coins. Some examples contain samples of California gold. These are quite rare and have sold for \$1000 to \$1500.

\_\_\_\_\_. *New varieties of gold and silver coins, counterfeit coins and bullion, with mint values.* Philadelphia, 1850. 61 pp., 1 plate.

A supplement to the above, this describes the new varieties of coins added to the mint collection, as well as current coins of other nations. Quite scarce. Examples have sold for \$300. Copies with California gold samples are rare and have sold for \$1200. A second edition, published in New York in 1851, was increased in length to 72 pp. Containing 5 plates, it has sold for \$250. The third and final edition (1852), which contains 103 pp. and 5 plates, has also sold for \$250. It is unlikely that either of the final two editions contained the gold samples; none are known.

Evans, George G. *Illustrated history of the United States mint with a complete description of American coinage.* Philadelphia, 1885. ca 160 pp., line cuts and halftones.

Later editions were dated every year from 1886 to 1894, then 1897, 1898, and 1901. This entertaining reading gives valuable information on the mint, the minting process, the officials in charge of the mint, several plates of coins with valuations. Invaluable for the halftones of mint directors and their short biographies. This very popular item is one of the books which established Evans as a publishing giant in his day. Few of the soft-covered issues have survived; they have sold for about \$50. Those covered in half morocco are equally scarce and have brought over \$100. Cloth-covered copies are well worth the \$25 or \$30 they command. The most popular edition seems to be the one issued in 1892, the centennial of the mint as well as the year for the Columbian Exposition. That edition usually brings \$40-60. Although the book is easily found, Durst published a 190 page reprint in 1977, obtainable for about \$25.

Fauver, L.B. *Exonumia symbolism & classification.* Menlo Park, 1982. 350 pp., ill.

This book thoroughly describes the issues of the Kettle firm in Birmingham, England. For a period of more than fifty years that firm issued tokens and game counters, some of which were imitations of early U.S. gold coins or things that have been touted as pattern territorial issues. One of the finest specialized books published on any series and by far the best in this esoteric area. Highly recommended. Copies are available for about \$60.

\_\_\_\_\_. *American counters, part 1: double eagle & eagle gold*. Menlo Park, 1983. 100 pp., ill.

This volume, a companion to the above and the only part published so far, deals with the counters of double eagle and eagle size, including some that look an awful lot like California gold coins. This book is a bit easier on the pocketbook at around \$10.

Ford, John J., Jr. *The Franklin hoard of United States Assay Office of Gold Coins: an answer to Eric P. Newman*. New York, 1967. 113 pp., hand drawn illustrations.

As stated in the introduction to this bibliography, I have tried to stay away from works that were not actually published and offered for sale to the public. This collection of correspondence and drawings falls dangerously close to that category, but as it is of controversial subject matter, registered in the Library of Congress, and written by one of our generation's most brilliant numismatists, it was thought best to include it here. The only copy which has appeared at auction was in Kolbe's sale of the Ted Craig library, August 13, 1983. The work includes correspondence about the questionable hoard pieces and the text of Eric Newman's 1966 speech, "Perfection in forgery". The Craig copy, presumably one of a very small number, brought \$2500 on an estimate of ten percent of that amount. If another copy should come up for auction, expect strong interest in it!

Frey, Albert R. *Dictionary of numismatic names with a glossary of numismatic terms in English, French, German, Italian, Swedish*. New York, 1947.

Originally published in *The American journal of numismatics* in 1917, this is one of the best numismatic dictionaries ever written in the English language, probably ranking just behind the more recent book by Richard Doty described above. This book belongs in the library of every collector, and even advanced numismatists will find themselves consulting it frequently. Scarce. Copies generally sell for over \$100.

Gilbert, James Henry. *Trade and currency in early Oregon: a study in the commercial and monetary history of the Pacific northwest*. New York, 1907. 126 pp., one graph.

Although this is an early work, predating the all-important Adams title described above, the historical details presented are of uniformly high quality. Important information on Oregon (especially) and California pioneer gold pieces is presented, along with a wide variety of data on commercial practices of the era. A fantastic reference. Scarce. Copies appear only infrequently at auction and have sold for around \$80.

Gould, Maurice. *Merchant counterstamps on American silver coins*. Wayland: Ovolon Publishing, 1962. 16 pp., ill.

Although this book has been largely superseded by the Gregory Brunk publication described above, the work is still of interest and obtainable for around \$10.

Griffin, Clarence. *The Bechtlers and Bechtler coinage and gold mining in North Carolina 1814-1830*. Forest City, 1929. 15 pp., ill.

Reprinted from *The Numismatist*, 1929, pp. 549-558, 808, by the author. A wealth of information, although most has since appeared in the less expensive Barfield and Strawn book described above. Copies of this work are quite scarce and have sold for around \$80.

Hafen, LeRoy R. *Currency, coinage and banking in pioneer Colorado*. Denver, 1933. 10 pp., ill.

Offprinted from *The Colorado magazine*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (May 1933), this is a good general overview of the Colorado issues though not too deep in any one area. I have not seen a copy of the offprint offered in an auction, although copies of the magazine appear and have brought around \$35.

Hancock, Virgil, and Laurence Spanbauer. *Standard catalogue of United States altered and counterfeit coins*. New York: 1979. 221 pp., ill.

A thorough listing of counterfeit and altered United States coins as well as colonial and territorial pieces. Many of the coins described in this book are obvious counterfeits; others could easily deceive the most experienced of collectors. Recommended reading. Although only 1000 copies were printed, obtainable for around \$30.

Harshaw, Lou. *The gold of Dahlonega: the first major gold rush in North America*. Asheville, 1976. 110 pp., ill.

A look at our nation's first large-scale gold rush. A great amount of technical and historical data is presented, and though much of it has been incorporated into other books, this is still worth the attention of the serious collector. Copies are available for around \$15-\$20.

Haseltine, John W. *Type table of United States dollars, half dollars, and quarters*. Philadelphia, 1881. 124 pp.

Originally an auction catalog for Haseltine's Nov. 28-30, 1881, sale. The collection offered was so extensive that Haseltine's descriptions served as a reference for many decades. Copies of the sale catalog are quite scarce and bring over \$75. The 1927 edition prepared by B. Max Mehl contains additional varieties as well as a section on the 1804 silver dollar. Although Mehl's edition is scarce, it sells for around \$35. The quarter dollar section was added by Zenith Trading Company to their reprint of the Browning work described earlier. A separate printing of the half dollar section (55 pages) was issued in Chicago in 1968 by Hewitt Numismatic Publications. This half dollar reprint is available for under \$5.

Hickcox, John H. *An historical account of American coinage, with plates*. Albany, 1858. 151 pp., 5 engraved plates of colonial coins.

This work is the first major attempt to publish something serious about the coinages of our fledgling country. Although the bulk of the book is taken up with colonial coinages, there is some

information on early mint issues as well. At the time of publication the author was twenty six years old, showing that age counts a lot less than effort and sincerity. Only 200 copies were printed, five of them a special issue on large paper. Regular copies sell for around \$400, while one of the special copies has reached \$1200.

Hilt, Robert P. *Die varieties of early United States coins*. Omaha, 1980. 122 pp., ill.

Mainly concerned with the silver and gold issues. The conclusions and die sequences presented by the author are interesting, if a bit controversial. Some may prove to be correct. Available for around \$40.

Hindle, Brooke. *David Rittenhouse*. Princeton, 1964. 394 pp., ill.

The standard biography of the first director of the mint. Very enjoyable reading, even the parts that are not directly linked to numismatics! Scarce. Copies have sold for around \$40.

Hodder, Michael, and Q. David Bowers. *The Norweb collection: an American legacy*. Wolfeboro, 1987. 288 pp., ill.

The illustrations include plates of some of the choicest coins offered since the Garrett sales. This book gives a thorough account of the formation of the famous collection, starting with the initial purchases by Liberty Holden in the nineteenth century. Fascinating reading, it is more than just a cut-and-dried account of coins; it also gives a look at the people who acquired them. It is a fitting tribute to Mrs Norweb, the grande dame of numismatics. At around \$30 this is a book to be read over and over. Although at the time of publication Bowers was already well known from the multitude of books he had written, Hodder had written only a few articles and a number of auction catalogs dealing mainly with foreign and ancient coins. That has changed, and Hodder has become one of our hobby's most prolific and respected authors, covering not only foreign and ancient issues but also colonial and regular U.S. coins, encased postage stamps, and even exonomia! If this bibliography is ever updated, expect a large increase in the number of entries from this young man.

Howe, Octavius T. *Argonauts of '49: history and adventures of the emigrant companies from Massachusetts 1849-1850*. Cambridge, 1923. 221 pp., ill.

A very scarce work listing one hundred twenty four companies that emigrated from Massachusetts and the various problems they encountered. A fantastic source of background material on both the gold coin and the ingots made by some of these companies. Copies are in great demand, and the only auction record I can find is over ten years old. Expect the book to realize at least \$125 at auction.

*(to be continued)*

#### CLASSIFIED

**Wanted:** Directories of American banks, pre-1940; periodicals intended for bankers, pre-1960. Ask for want list. W.K. Raymond, 660 E. Carmen Ave, Fresno, CA 93728 (8.4)

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## Books at auction.

"The book auction seems to have been originally practiced by the Elzevirs of Leyden, but it gained its widest vogue in England. The first auction sale of books took place in London (as also in England) in 1676, a London bookseller, William Cooper, being the introducer of the system, having, no doubt, obtained the idea from the auction sales of the Elzevirs in Leyden. Clavell refers to these sales of Cooper's in amusing terms:

'As to the method used in selling books by auction in London, I suppose that many men have paid dear for their experience in this way; and I judge it may be demonstrable that 'tis more probable for the buyer to gain advantage by a Lottery; than in this way... it being apparent that most books bought in an auction may be got cheaper in Booksellers' shops. And it cannot well be judged otherwise, for many commissions for the best book are given, it may be twenty orders for one book, that when buyers think to have it cheap, they outbid one another and run 10'/ or 12/- in 30 beyond the price in shops, sometimes more, sometimes less. The experience of which being known and felt, and the imposing of old rubbish out of shops, and bad editions of books under pretence of eminent mens' libraries, with other methods not here mentioned, may in a little time put an end to this project.'"

This quotation from Putnam's *Books and their makers during the middle ages* has been copied from James Westfall Thompson's *The Frankfurt book fair*. Putnam is quoting from *The general catalog of books printed in England since the dreadful fire of London, 1666. To the end of Trinity term, 1680, together with the texts of single sermons, with the authors' names; plays acted at both the theatres; and an abstract of the general bills of mortality since 1660, with an account of the titles of all books of law, navigation, music, etc., and a catalog of school books, to which is now added a catalogue of books printed in foreign parts and in England, since the year 1670, collected by R. Clavell*. London: S. Roycroft for Robert Clavell, 1680.

Putnam apparently paid £3 10s for his copy of Clavell. He does not say whether he bought it at auction.

## Seed money twenty five dollars

*Fred Lake submitted the following quotation from the Proceedings and collections of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, Vol. II (1886), pp 158-60.*

"While the immediate work of the Society should be confined to those branches which are covered by its name... its valuable numismatic cabinet should not be neglected. In 1885, the Trustees wisely appropriated the sum of \$25 for the purchase of coins, and this sum was expended in perfecting one set of the U. S. silver and copper issues, by the purchase of such pieces as cannot be obtained in circulation. Such an appropriation should be made annually.

To the members of the Society this may seem an 'expensive luxury', because Numismatics are regarded too much as a mere 'boy's hobby', rather than as 'the science of coins and medals', as Worcester defines the word.

As an aid to the study of Archaeology and History the Science of Numismatics cannot be overestimated. The history of the coins of a country is the history of its finances; the history of the medals of a country is the record of its leading events. A study of the various coins in circulation as money throughout the thirteen colonies until the establishment of the United States Mint, 1793, and subsequently, will naturally lead the student into an examination of the financial problems of every decade in the history of the country. Merely a glance at the medals issued by the United States Mint will reveal the fact that by especial act of Congress, the United States Mint has struck and issued over fifty bronze medals, each of which commemorates some signal victory of the arms of the United States over its foes from 1775 to 1816. These great events cannot be lost in oblivion so long as the medallic records exist.

This is true of nearly all the large collection of medals in our cabinet; with very few exceptions they are historical, perpetuating the memory of great epochs, or individual incidents in the history of various countries to which they belong.

It is particularly true of the ancient Greek and Roman Empires, that not only recorded events, but many events of importance which find no place in

known written history were made immortal by the issue at the time of coins or medals bearing the record of the event in gold, silver, or base metal.

That the study of numismatics leads up to higher studies, the writer learned by experience, as he was led to the study of the history of Spain and of the Peninsular War by finding in his cabinet, when as a youth, a pistareen of Ferdinand VII, 'King of Spain', and one of Joseph Bonaparte, 'King of Spain', each bearing the same date, 1808.

As one purpose of this Society is the education of coming generations in the history of this section, and those great events of our land connected therewith, it is our duty to see that each branch of her work should be so fully developed that no facility that would aid the student be neglected."

#### *Fred adds*

It is interesting to note that the Reverend Hayden lived by his own words, for within the same volume is a treatise on "Silver and copper medals" which he authored. His research included reading through "some 200 catalogs covering 30 years of dealers' sales". Those of us who collect numismatic literature can find comfort in knowing that we have been preceded by others of similar bent. Ω

## The brown book

ALTHOUGH this illustrated and priced guide to modern foreign coins was based on Wayte Raymond's *Coins of the world* (see this journal, Vol. VIII, No.1 [Spring, 1990], pp 10-13), Mr Yeoman introduced his own ideas. Coin-issuing countries were arranged in a single alphabet, although Chinese and Canadian provinces and Indian and German states followed their respective countries. Continuing what had become a standard practice in his red book, Yeoman began each country with the lowest denomination coin. He said that the collector was more likely to have small coins rather than large, so he had the lower denominations put where they could be easily found. Under each country coins were grouped by ruler or other natural division, often a change

in government or a wholesale recoinage; each country had its own set of sequential numbers. Although from the dealer's standpoint the pricing system was deficient, since it listed a price only for the most inexpensive year of a type in only one grade, yet it enabled him to ask a higher price by claiming that the coin he offered wasn't the cheap one! If he used the listed price as a basis for figuring his buying price he was guaranteed a profit.

The brown book, along with Richard Yeoman's other books, was published by the Whitman Publishing Company in Racine, Wisconsin. Second-hand copies of the thirteen editions are common today, but many of them are well thumbed and most of the colorful dust covers have been worn out. Each edition consists of 512 pages, although in the earlier editions the last three pages are blank. A coated paper stock was used in order that the half-tone illustrations would print with some detail. The books are sewn in sections, 16mo, with a page height of 19 cm. The dust jackets retain the same design throughout but the colors were changed to mark the different editions; the brown-cloth hard covers remained the same until the twelfth edition appeared in soft covers.

**First edition.** A catalog/ of/ modern/ world coins/ by R.S. Yeoman/ Includes coins of all countries of the world in all metals/ issued during approximately the past 100 years./ Profusely illustrated/ Coins are chronologically listed, and grouped/ by metallic content, design (type) and denomination./ Each coin type is individually identified by a/ catalog number, denomination and date or dates of issue./ An estimated value is shown for each type/ and denomination./ First Edition./ Copyright 1957/ Whitman Publishing Company/ Racine, Wisconsin.

The list of contributors for this first edition was short: A.E. Bebee, Lauren Benson, Earl Brown, Vernon L. Brown, James E. Charlton, Henry Christensen, William L. Clark, William D. Craig, Henry Grunthal, Lee F. Hewitt, and Ernst Kraus. No mention was made of the extensive borrowing from Wayte Raymond's earlier world coin books.

**Second edition** 1957. The decision to publish a second edition the same year as the first indicates the immediate success of the brown book. Although additions and corrections were made, clever editing made it possible to maintain most pages unchanged. Some of the changes, though, made it necessary to change catalog numbers for some coins, a serious inconvenience in a catalog which goes through multiple editions. In general adding new issues to a country presented no problem, since it simply involved continuing the country's series of numbers.

**Third edition** 1959. With the third edition the debt to Raymond's catalogs was finally acknowledged by an addition to the title page: "Many illustrations and data herein are based on Wayte Raymond's standard works on 19th and 20th Century Coins of the World."

**Fourth edition** c1961. Revisions to this edition included the addition of coins omitted earlier, the 1945 issues of Mongolia and the early 1920's coins of Bukhara. Also picked up were the Belgian coins of Leopold I, extending Belgium back a generation. The heading Tunis was corrected to the name of the country, Tunisia.

**Fifth edition** 1962. With this edition the list of principal contributors and source references was moved to the title page, which now became as crowded as that of an eighteenth century English book. A new entry was titled Arabian Sultanates. It included the obsolete coins of the State of Quaiti and the sultanates of Lahej and Mukalla.

**Sixth edition** 1964. In a sense this is the last edition; additions and revisions made it apparent that the limit had been reached. It was even necessary in this edition to delete those Belgian coins of Leopold I which had been added in the fourth edition. The decision was made to begin a new, inexpensive catalog of modern world coins, which first appeared in 1966 as *Current coins of the world* by R.S. Yeoman. Of the same format as the brown book, it was limited to coins of the most recent twenty five years. It was planned to add new issues

to the new catalog in later editions. The coin numbers in the new book continued the series in the old. The brown book continued to be published sporadically, but although successive editions were edited they did not include later issues of coins.

**Seventh edition** 1967. With this edition Neil Shafer became coordinating editor and Holland Wallace associate editor.

**Eighth edition** 1968. With this edition three men joined Yeoman on the title page: Neil Shafer, coordinating editor; Holland Wallace, associate editor; Kenneth E. Bressett, project supervisor.

**Ninth edition** 1970. Whitman had become a division of Western Publishing Company, Inc., so the new publisher's name now appeared on the title page.

**Tenth edition** 1972. Alterations in the catalog made it necessary to remove post 1960 coins from *Modern world coins*; those coins remained, of course, in the companion *Current coins of the world*.

In 1972 appeared a heavyweight contender which challenged the brown book, Krause and Mishler's *Standard catalog of world coins*. Soon named the "telephone book" because of its size, this so-called standard catalog dealt an eventually fatal blow to Yeoman's *Catalog of modern world coins*. Insult was added to injury by wholesale borrowing of Yeoman's catalog numbers for coins.

**Eleventh edition** c1974. With this edition Holland Wallace became editor; Shafer and Wallace were dropped from the title page. Although Yeoman's introduction and the dust jacket state that the cut-off date is now 1950, it appears that few post 1950 coins were removed from the catalog.

*(to be continued)*

## The printer's devil

by Joel Orosz

MAYBE the collapse of Communism is contagious, but it seems that good news is breaking out all over for numismatists, especially for numismatic bibliophiles. It all began with the ANA's decision to sell ANACS to the Amos Press. Back in the early 1980's, when ANACS was bringing in over half the ANA's revenue, I used to take cynical pleasure in musing that the ANA, the world's largest collector's organization, was being supported by investors' money. It seemed to be poetic justice for what investors had done to numismatics. Alas, I had forgotten the golden rule: he who has the gold makes the rules. When P.C.G.S. invented the infamous eleven point mint state grading system the ANA had no choice but to make it their official grading system-- even though this was a system that their members didn't need, didn't want, and didn't understand. The ANA has paid a terrible price for their dependence on investors. Now that the ANACS monkey is off the ANA's back, let us hope that the investor's grading scale will soon follow it. Surely a grading system can be devised that collectors need, want, and understand. In any case, hats off to the ANA board of governors for making this much needed decision.

It is intriguing to speculate whether the ANA's decision to sell ANACS, had it come a couple of years earlier, would have prevented the formation of The National Coin Collector's Association. The NCCA was founded because of the opinion that the ANA had forsaken the collector. At this writing there is still considerable controversy about this development. On the one side are those who say that the best way to advance the cause of the collector is to stay inside the ANA and change it from within. On the other side are those who say that the collector deserves an organization devoted only to his interests. I am, quite frankly, not certain which of these rationales is the more persuasive. I am, however, willing to advance a prediction. The NCCA will provide some competition to the ANA, and the new organization's journal, *The U.S. coin collector*, will likewise provide a competitor for *The numismatist*. The result will be a choice for collectors, with two organizations vying for their favor,

and an unqualified boon for bibliophiles, who should be able to enjoy two journals striving to please. It is an open question how long Mr William Atkinson, the founder of NCCA, can sustain what is now a one-man show. For as long as he is able, however, the two journals will strive to top each other, and their readers will be the winners.

Even if *The U.S. coin collector* should fail, a recent event tells us that in numismatic literature, at least, there is life after death. *The American journal of numismatics*, which became a shade in 1919, has risen again as the *AJN*, second series. Although this is mainly a change in name-- the new *AJN* differs from its larva, *Museum notes*, mainly because of the addition of book reviews-- this is still a wonderful development. The old *AJN* is one of the glories of American numismatic literature and forms the centerpiece of an advanced library. It is great, therefore, to welcome the resurrection of an old friend.

Finally, we should welcome the good news that pours off the presses every week. I think it is safe to say that at least seventy five percent of numismatic writers who have ever lived are alive and writing today. I cannot remember a time when the quantity or quality of publications has been as high as it is today, and I doubt that the graybeards among us can remember an era to match this one. I cannot think of a better time to be a reader and collector of numismatic literature. In case you have lost track, this issue marks the fourth consecutive year that *The asylum* has issued four separate numbers within a year. As anyone who has ever edited a journal will tell you, this is no mean feat. And, in your columnist's unsolicited opinion, *The asylum* is better than ever. I propose an end of the year toast to David Block, who has wielded the editor's axe with such skill since mid-1988.

Since the holidays are upon us, it seems only appropriate to summarize this compendium of good news with a quote from Charles Dickens. It is not, as you might expect, from *A Christmas carol*, and it is not even complete, but for me, as I reflect on 1990, it is wholly accurate: "It was the best of times."

Ω

*Best wishes for a joyous holiday season and a prosperous New Year.*

*David and Carling*



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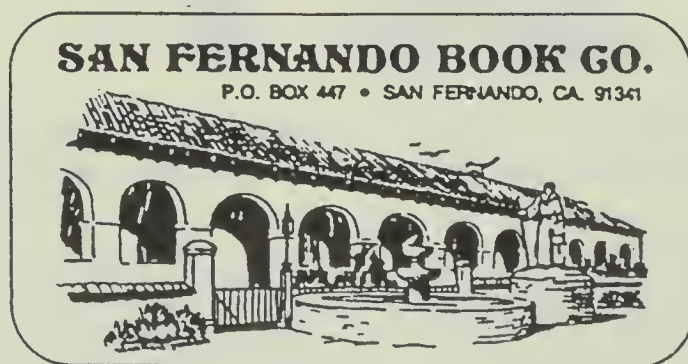
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